

Application Number: F/YR12/0506/F
Minor
Parish/Ward: Medworth Wisbech South
Date Received: 05 July 2012
Expiry Date: 30 August 2012
Applicant: Fairbrothers Pharmacy Ltd

Proposal: Installation of new shop front and security shutter
Location: 5 Church Terrace, Wisbech

Site Area/Density: 0.0213ha

Reason before Committee: The application has been called in by Councillor Hodgson as whilst recognising the design and conservation considerations of the premises he considers that the security benefits of the proposal and other examples of security provision within the location should also be given weight in the decision making process.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks full planning permission for the installation of external shutters and a new shop front at 5 Church Terrace, Wisbech. The site is located within Wisbech Conservation Area and is opposite the Church of St Peter and Paul, which is a Grade I Listed Building.

The inclusion of external shutters would be out of keeping with, and detrimental to, the character of the Conservation Area and would fail to contribute positively to the setting of the Grade I Listed Building. The justification in terms of reduction in crime risk has been noted, however, given the low crime statistics for the area and aesthetic and historic significance of the area, the impact of the proposal in visual terms is considered to wholly outweigh the crime risk implications. Despite the location the submission has failed to assess or even acknowledge the heritage assets affected and has failed to consider alternative solutions, which would be more appropriate in this historic setting.

The application fails to comply with policies in the Development Plan and it is, therefore, recommended that planning permission is refused.

2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------|---|----------------------|
| 2.1 | F/YR11/0546/F | Erection of a single-storey rear extension to form store to existing pharmacy | Granted 25/08/2011 |
| | F/YR09/0547/F | Installation of new shop front including security shutters and replacement of first and second floor windows on front elevation | Granted 28/10/2009 |
| | F/YR09/0282/F | Installation of new shop front and replacement of 2 windows to second floor | Withdrawn 18/06/2009 |

F/YR09/0281/A Display of 1 internally illuminated fascia sign and 1 internally illuminated projecting sign to front elevation Withdrawn 18/06/2009

3. **PLANNING POLICIES**

3.1 **National Planning Policy Framework:**

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 17: Core planning principles.

Paragraph 56: Great importance is attached to the design of the built environment.

Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

3.2 **East of England Plan**

ENV6: Local Planning Authorities should identify, protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of the region, its archaeology, historic buildings, places and landscapes, including historic parks and gardens and those features and sites (and their settings) which are significant.

3.3 **Draft Fenland Core Strategy:**

CS14: Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District.

3.4 **Fenland District Wide Local Plan:**

E9: Proposals for the alteration and extension of existing buildings should respect the scale, style and character of the original building, use matching materials, have regard for the amenity of adjoining properties and the locality in general, provide adequate access, parking and amenity space.

E12: Developments in a conservation area should preserve or enhance its special architectural or historic interest, development proposals are expected to be of a size, scale and design sympathetic to the appearance and the townscape character of the area, use building materials of an appropriate type and quality, not prejudice other environmental or highway policies.

E17: New shop fronts should normally display a unity with the building of which they are a part (including the use of appropriate materials), incorporate the traditional elements of shop front design, reflect the scale and proportion of adjoining buildings and the street scene as a whole.

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 ***Parish/Town Council***

Recommend approval as members have no objections or observations in respect of this application.

4.2 ***FDC Conservation Officer***

The scheme would not retain or enhance the character of the Wisbech Conservation Area as required in paragraph 135 of the NPPF. Its impact on the setting of the adjacent Grade I Listed church would be unfortunate. While the existing shop-front is modern, it is at least timber-framed and

its impact on the character of the Conservation Area is minimal. The proposed aluminium-framed shop-front, front door and external shutters are less sympathetic in their appearance.

Recommend the retention of the existing timber-framed shop-front. If shutters are required, these should at least be internal and understated, rather than overbearing in their design. Note only cross-sections and not external designs are shown on the drawings.

4.3 ***English Heritage***

The application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice.

4.4 ***Six Bodies***

The Georgian Group – recommend refusal of the scheme as no analysis or explanation and history relating to the fabric of this building has been provided, contrary to paragraphs 32 and 128 of the NPPF.

Ancient Monuments Society – object to the application for the replacement of a timber shop front. The shop front is an integral part of the building and its removal would cause serious harm to the buildings significance.

4.5 ***Wisbech Society***

Not received at time of report

4.6 ***CCC Archaeology***

Not received at time of report

4.7 ***FDC Environment and Health Services***

No objections as the proposed development is unlikely to have a detrimental effect on local air quality or the noise climate

4.8 ***FDC Food and Safety***

No objections

4.9 ***Police Architectural Liaison Officer***

The shop is already fitted with internal perforated steel shutters positioned directly behind the shop front. The internal shutters have not been shown on the drawings provided. There is no precedent for the use of external shutters within the area.

Within the past 12 months there has only been one burglary incident whilst the premises were closed. This was through the glass of the front door which an internal grille or shutter would have prevented (the internal shutters were not in use at the time of the offence). In the same period and within the same postcode area, there has been only one incident of a nearby property having a window damaged. The crime risk of burglary to this property which shutters or grilles would prevent is moderate.

Details of the construction or style of the shutters have not been provided however an objection would be made if they were to be solid or perforated as it would create a sterile street scene and an opportunity for graffiti.

The installation of an internal shutter/grille would address the issue of burglary without providing a sterile street appearance when the property is closed. It is recommended that heavy duty laminated windows and doors are fitted to deter criminal damage.

The scheme cannot be supported or outright refused at this time as there are too many unknowns.

- 4.10 ***FDC Housing and Development*** Not received at time of report
- 4.11 ***FDC Assets and Projects*** No objections, the proposal creates no detriment to any adjacent FDC assets
- 4.12 ***Local Residents:*** None received

5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 5.1 The site is located on the northern side of the highway, within the centre of a terrace of buildings. The site lies within the town centre, within Wisbech Conservation Area and is opposite the church of St Peter and Paul, which is a Grade I Listed Building. The site currently has an A1 use (chemist) and is defined by a timber shop front with large glazing panels. The area is characterised by varying commercial uses and within the street scene in question, external shutters are not featured.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 The key considerations for this application are:

- Principle and policy implications
- Impact on the surrounding area
- Crime risk.

(a) Principle and Policy Implications

The site lies within Wisbech Conservation area and opposite a Grade I Listed Building. Paragraph 128 of the NPPF stipulates that applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposal including any contribution made by their setting. Since no reference has been made to either the Conservation Area or the neighbouring Grade I Listed Building within the submission, the proposal is in principle contrary to the provisions of the NPPF.

E12 of the Local Plan, ENV6 of the East of England Plan and CS14 of the emerging Core Strategy require new developments to protect and enhance any on-site and adjacent heritage assets and their settings. In view of the lack of acknowledgement of the heritage assets within the application, Officers are unable to assess whether or not they have been considered within the scheme. It would, therefore, be appropriate to assume that no attempt has been made to protect or enhance heritage assets contrary to policies of the Development Plan.

(b) Impact on the surrounding area

Details of how the building will appear when the shutters are closed have not been included within the submission. However, it is considered that the inclusion of external shutters and aluminium shop front within the historic environment would appear incongruous and out of keeping with this traditional setting. The shutters would detract from the character of the original building and would result in a sterile feature, which is uncharacteristic of street scene and the setting of the neighbouring Grade I Listed church.

(c) Crime risk

The justification for the proposed external shutters and aluminium shop front is to prevent burglary. However, the site already benefits from internal shutters and the Police Architectural Liaison Officer indicates that these were not closed when the only burglary in the last 12 months occurred. With this in mind, and following comments received from the Police Architectural Liaison Officer, it is considered that the works are not proportionate to any perceived crime risk.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The proposal fails to have due regard to the on-site and neighbouring heritage assets. The harm caused to the character and appearance of Wisbech Conservation Area and the setting of the neighbouring Grade I Listed Building is considered to outweigh any benefits gained by providing additional security to the site. On the basis of the information received from Cambridgeshire Constabulary the site is not considered to be at significant crime risk and other measures such as internal shutters, which are existing, and toughened glass could be used to overcome any risk of crime. The proposal fails to comply with policies of the Development Plan and it is, therefore, recommended that the

application is refused.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse – for the following reasons:

1. **The proposed external shutters and aluminium shop front would appear as incongruous features, which would be to the detriment of the character and visual amenities of Wisbech Conservation Area and the setting of the neighbouring Grade I Listed Building, contrary to E12 and E17 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan, ENV6 of the East of England Plan, CS14 of the emerging Fenland Communities Development Plan and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**
2. **The proposal fails to address or take into consideration the significance of the heritage assets affected by the development, contrary to Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.**

9. UPDATE

Members will recall this application being presented to the August Planning Committee where it was resolved to defer the decision to allow the Committee to carry out a site visit and in order that further details regarding the appearance of the shutters when closed can be provided.

A revised drawing showing the front elevation of the shutters, when closed, has now been provided. It shows the shutters to have an almost solid appearance thereby exacerbating Officers concerns with regard to visual amenities as set out in 6.1(c) of this report. A further consultation has been carried out on the additional information, the responses received are as follows:

Town Council:	No additional comments
FDC Conservation Officer:	Still feel the principle of external shutters is not acceptable and this view is taken by neighbouring authorities in Cambridgeshire. The design is inadequate to enable a decision to be made in its favour.
FDC Environmental Protection:	No objections
Police Architectural Liaison Officer:	Any external shutter could become a precedent for the area to the detriment of the visual character of Wisbech Town Centre. Not objecting to the installation of a new shop front only the use of external shutters as the premises have adequate internal shutters fitted at present.

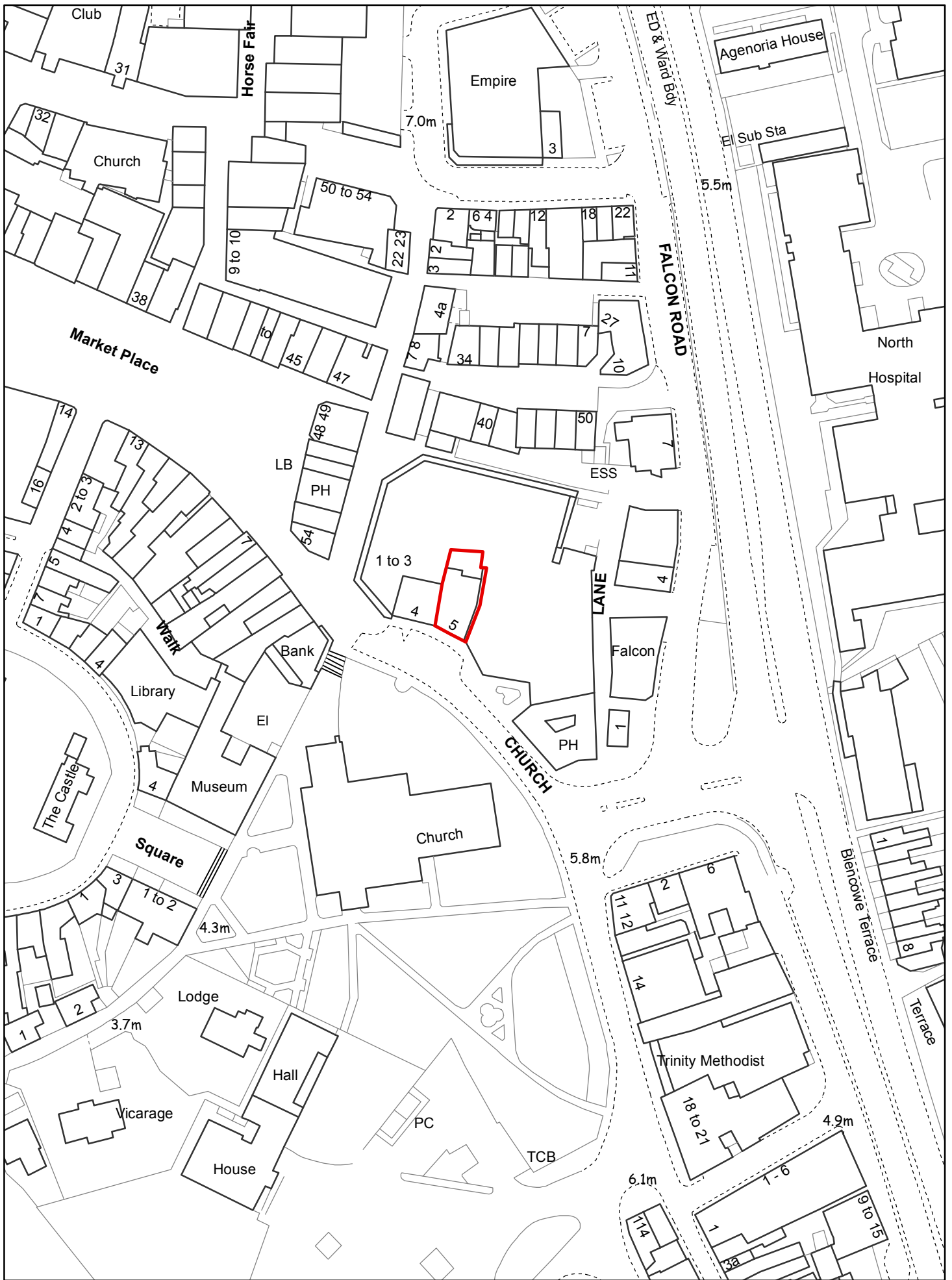
On a further note the use of mesh slats on the shutter will depend on the size of the holes drilled into the shutters. From a distance if the holes are small then the appearance will be that of solid shutters and allow little light to enter or exit the premises again creating a sterile area.

Ask that should approval be considered for this application then a condition be applied that notwithstanding the information supplied details of the shutter type is to be submitted and approved prior to commencement of works and thereafter installed as approved in the interest of visual amenity of the area.

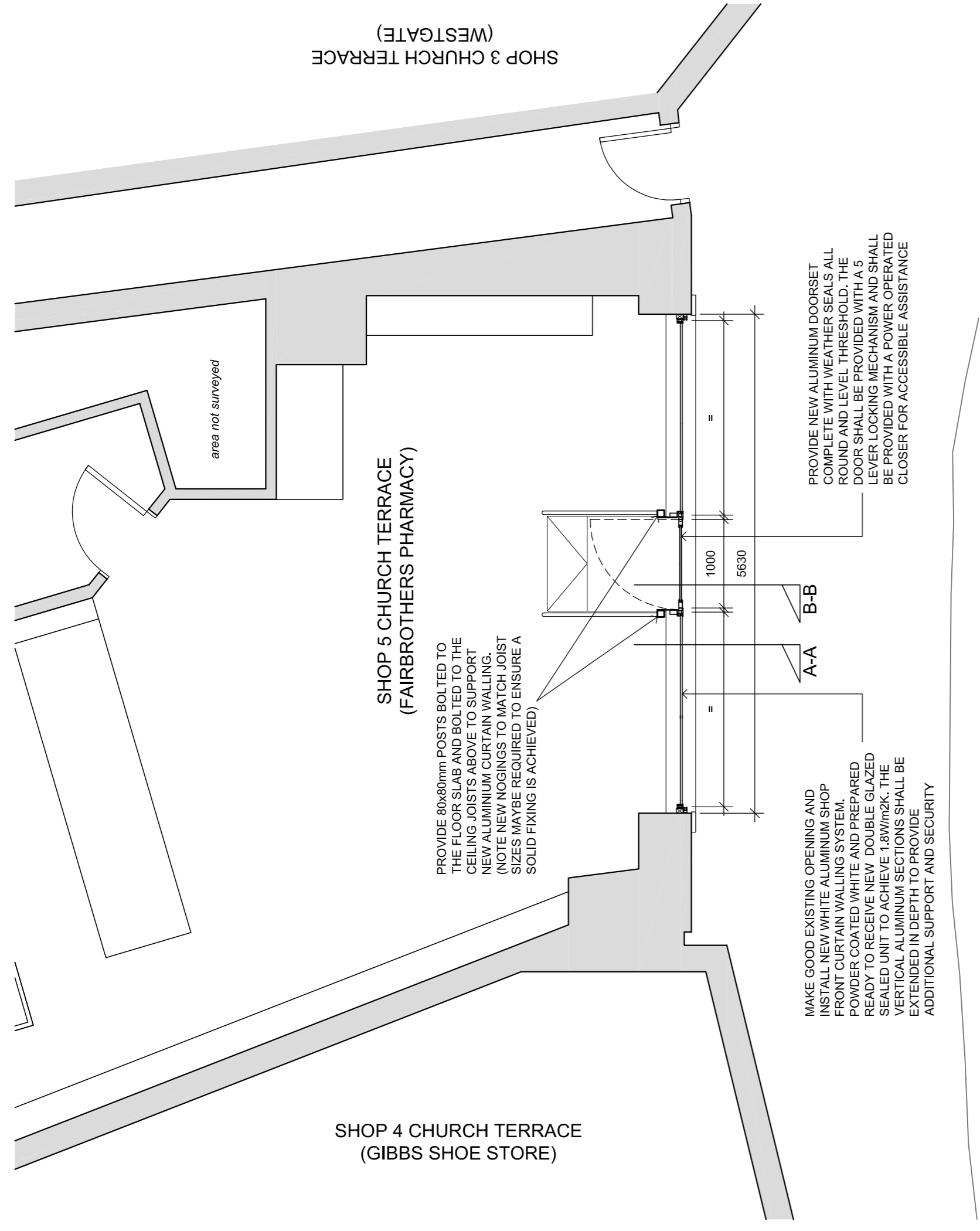
10. **RESOLUTION**

Refuse – for the following reasons:

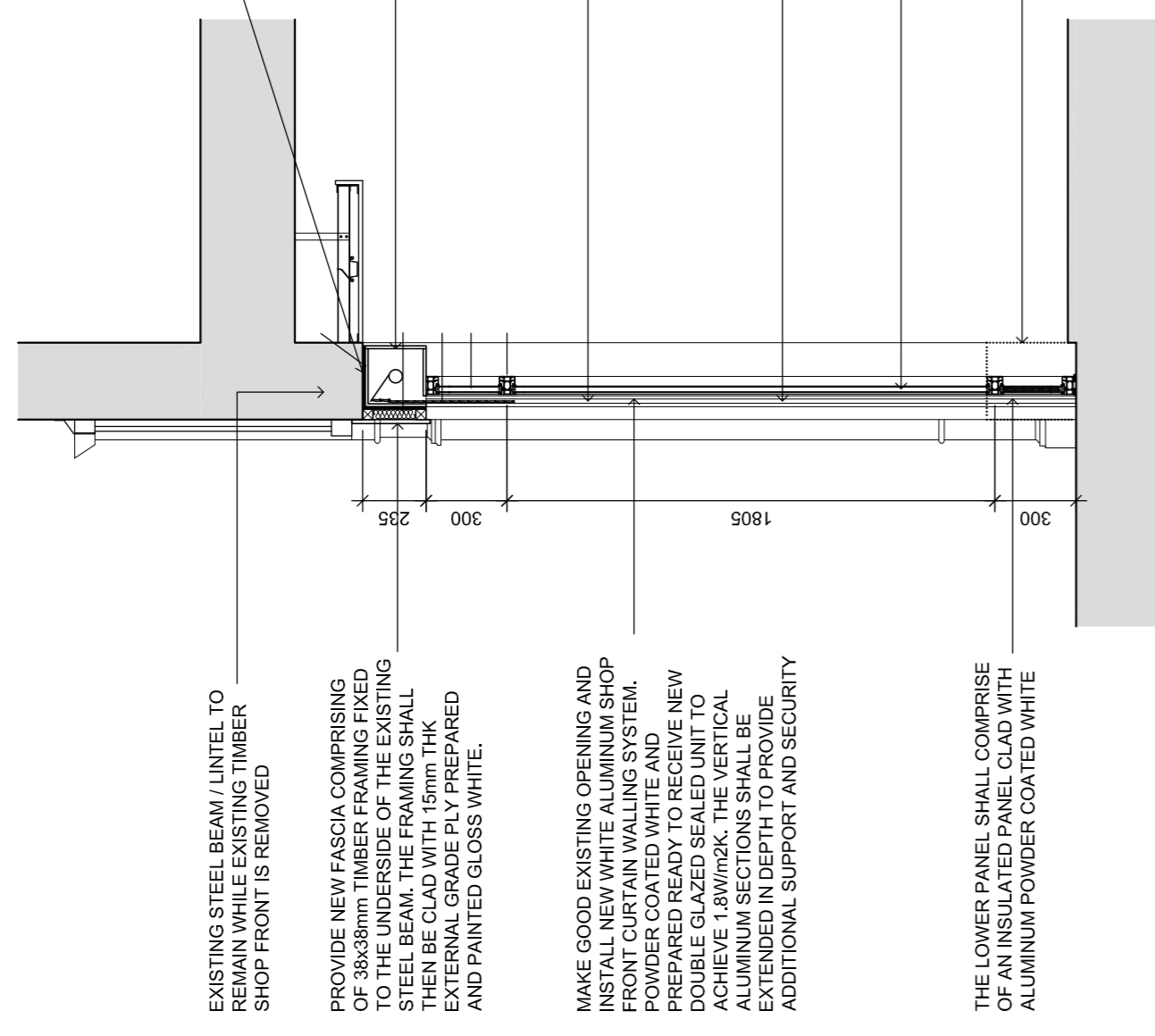
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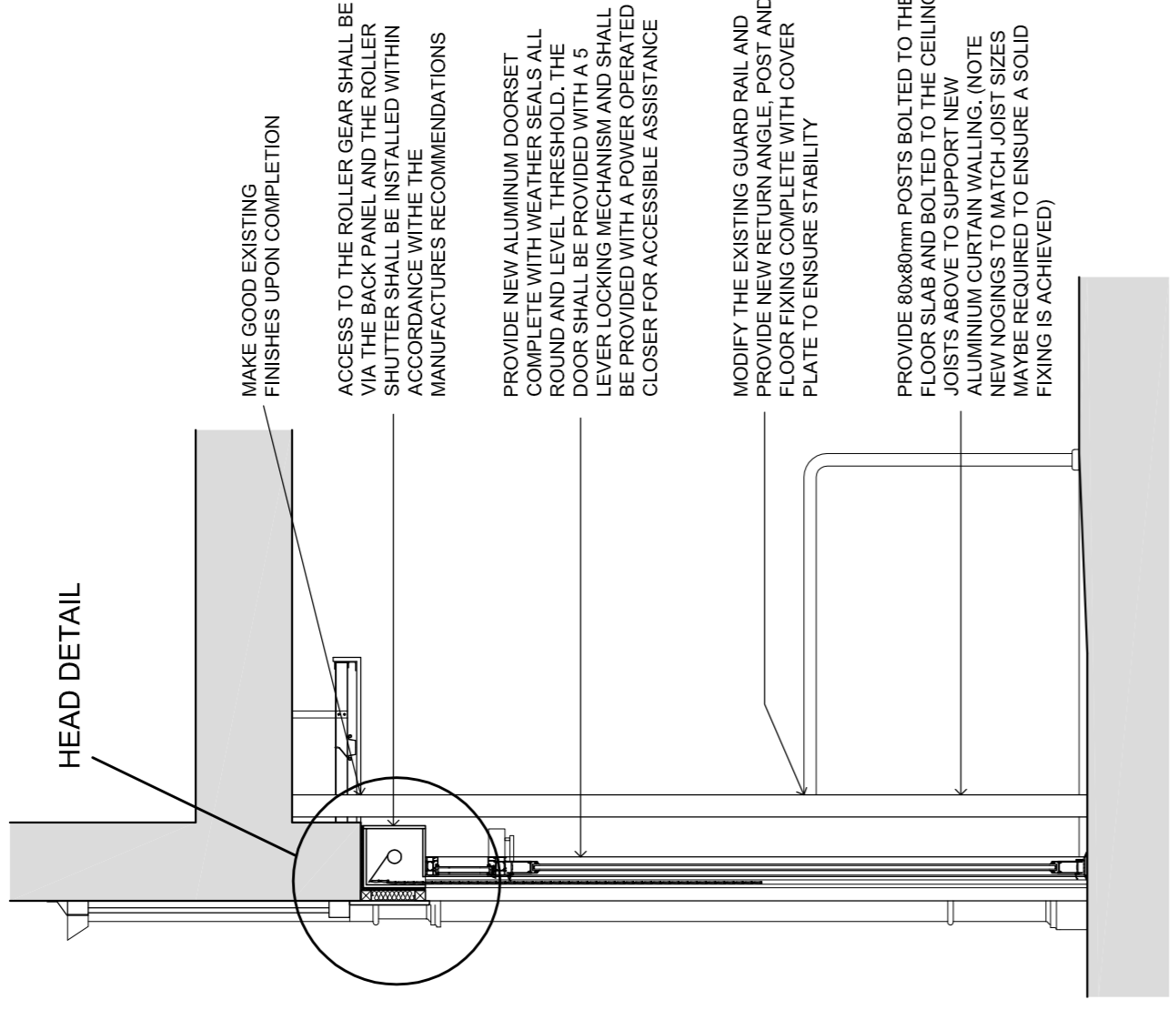
PROPOSED SECURITY WORKS TO EXISTING SHOP FRONT



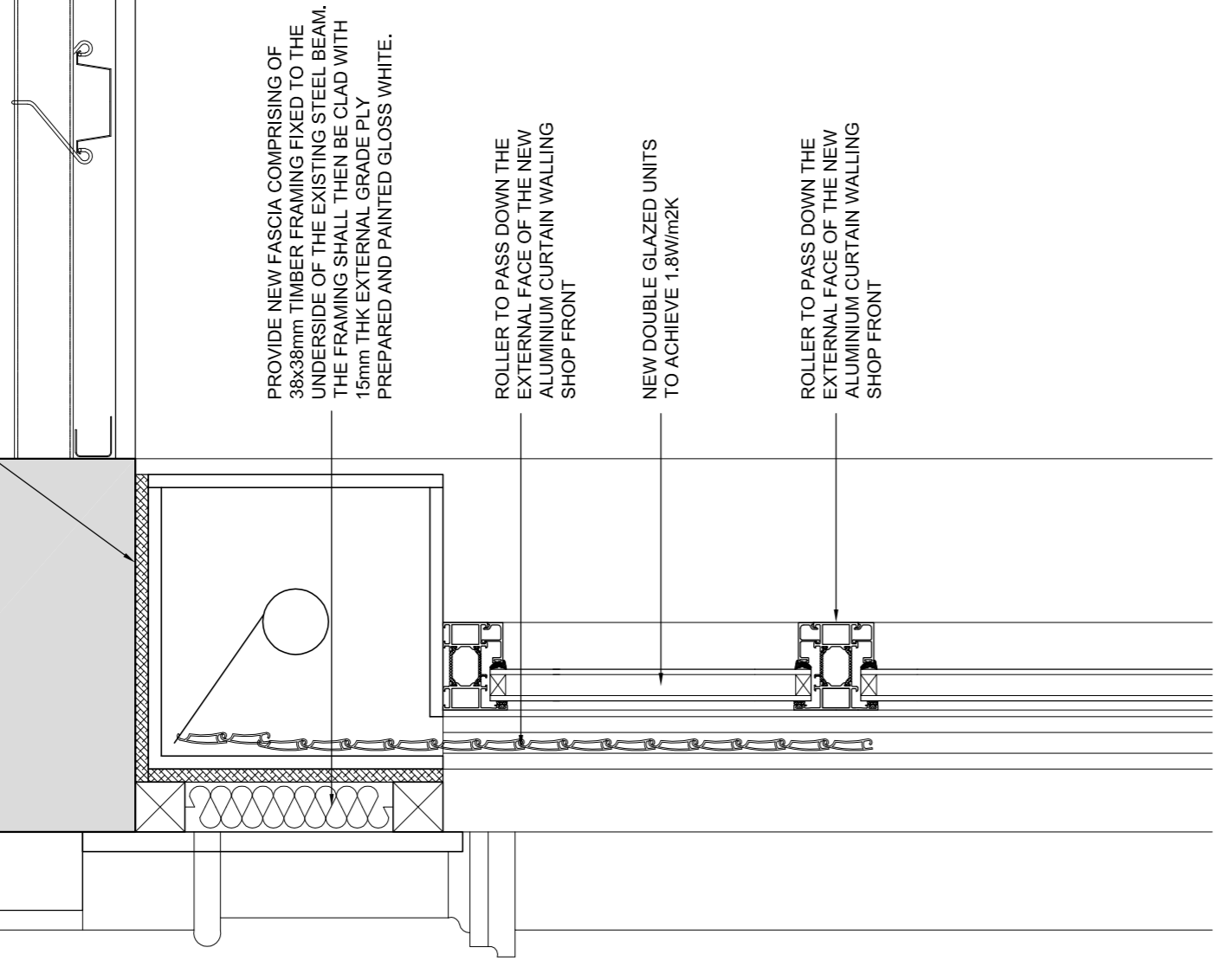
PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN Scale 1:50



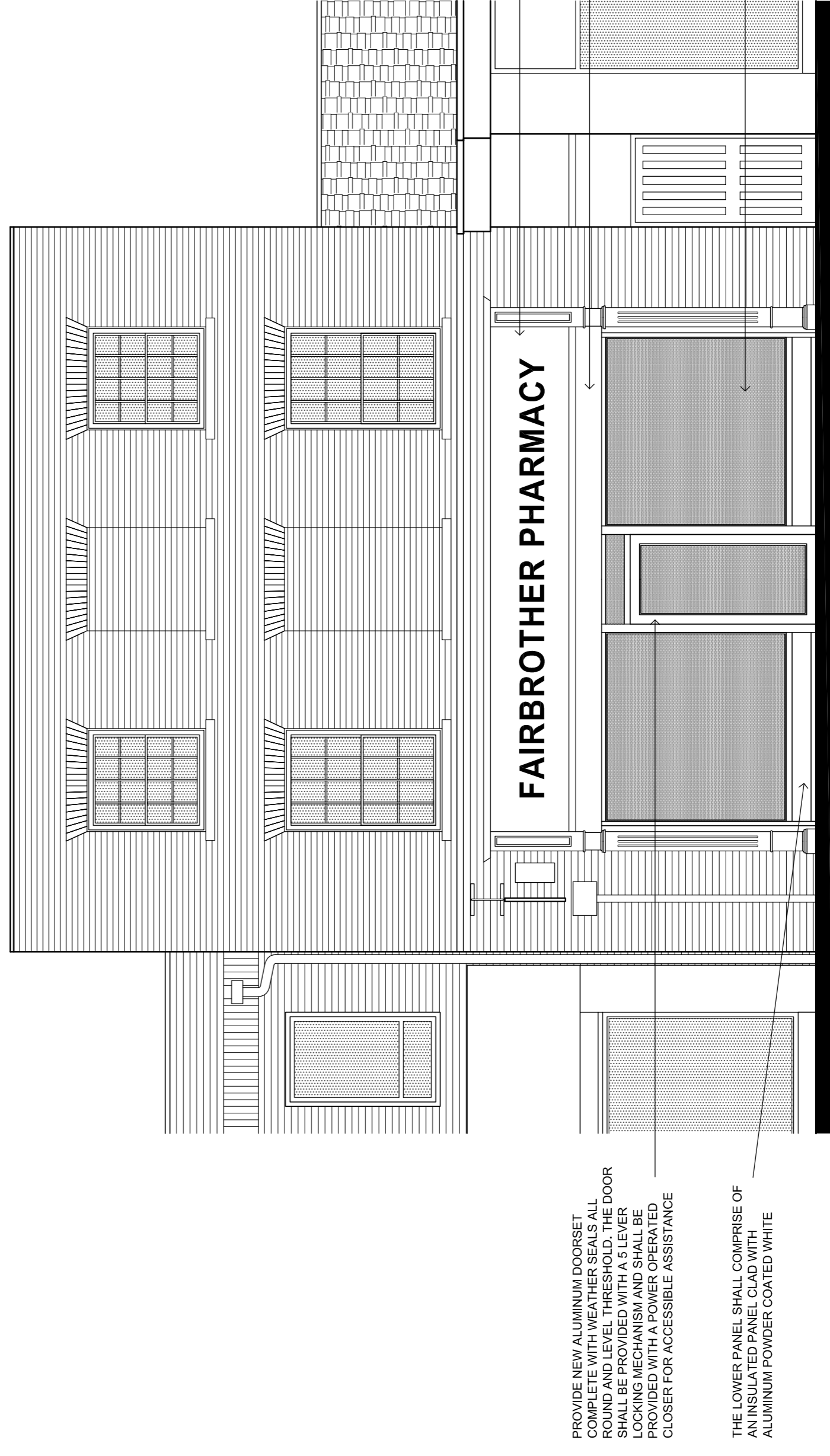
PROPOSED SECTION A-A Scale 1:25



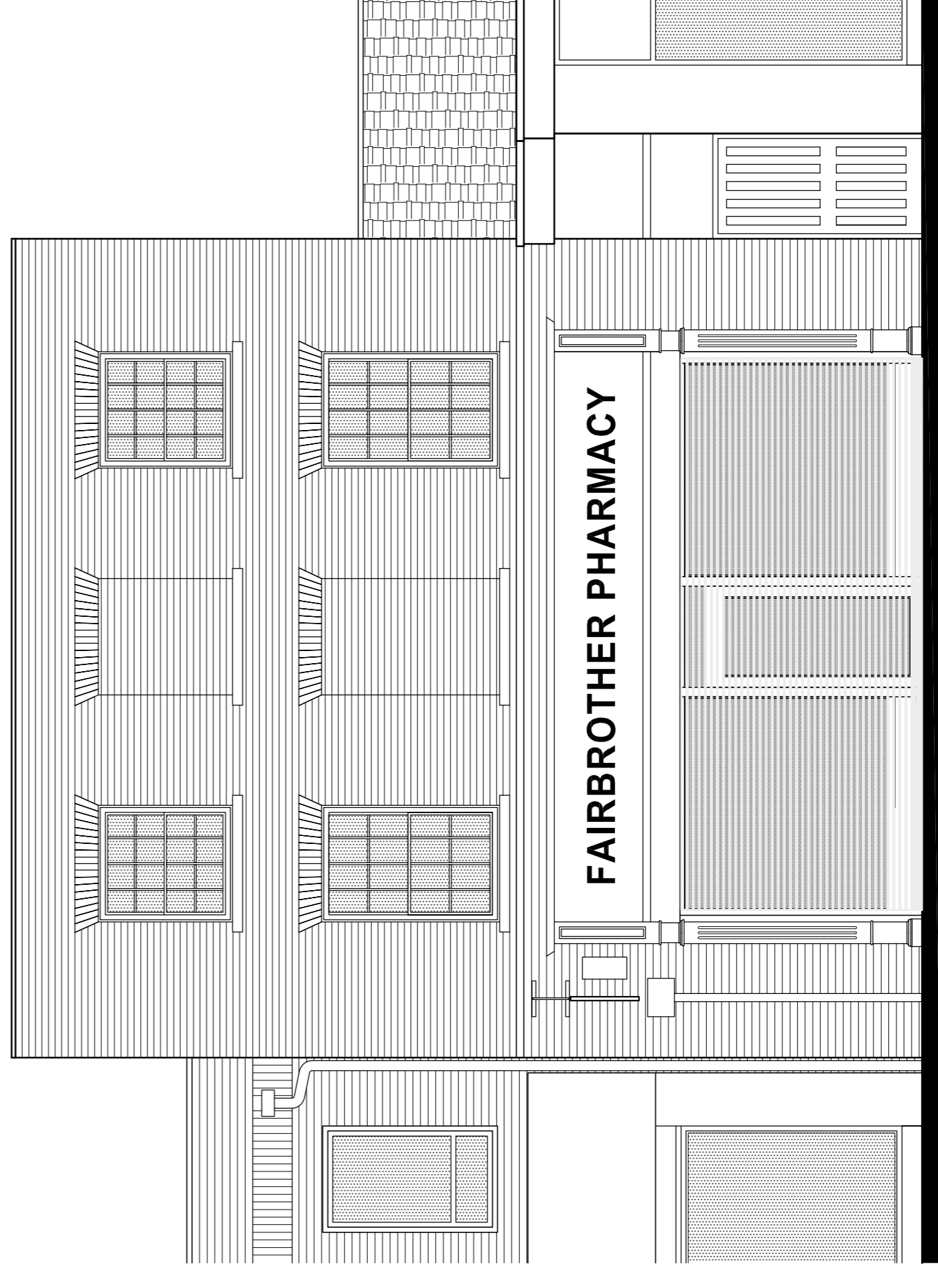
PROPOSED SECTION B-B Scale 1:25



HEAD DETAIL Scale 1:5



PROPOSED ELEVATION (SHUTTERS OPEN) Scale 1:50



PROPOSED ELEVATION (SHUTTERS CLOSED) Scale 1:50

Rev	Description	Date
Rev C	Section lines added and additional elevation added with shutter in closed position	SEP 12
Rev B	Titles amended	JUL 12
Rev A	Centre bar removed and steel posts added to support new shop front	MAY 12

Project:	PROPOSED SECURITY WORKS TO EXISTING SHOP FRONT 5 CHURCH TERRACE WIRBECH
Contract:	PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS, ELEVATIONS AND SECTIONS A-A AND B-B
Drawn:	Daren Fowler
Date:	MAR 2012
Scale:	As shown @ A1

1010 - A102 - Rev B

The details depicted on this drawing are the copyright and may not be reproduced without permission. This drawing must not be re-issued, loaned or copied without the consent. Errors omissions and discrepancies should be reported to the originator immediately.

All dimensions to be checked before site or off-site fabrication by the Contractor, his Sub-contractor or Supplier.
Do not scale plans - use figure or grid dimensions where given. Any deviation from the drawing is to be reported to the originator immediately.
Structure, structural members & geotechnical investigations are to be carried out & approved by the appointed Structural Engineer. Any deviations from the drawing are to be reported to the appointed consultant immediately.

IF IN DOUBT ASK!